

## Children and divorce in Flanders (Belgium): differentials according to migrant origin

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Marriages and unmarried cohabitations end up in divorce/separation more frequently and rapidly. Often separations involve children. This is not only so for native couples; divorce/separation rates are also high among western migrants from the Netherlands, France and Italy and among non-western migrants from Turkey and Morocco. A large-scale investigation of the perception of divorce by children and the effects of divorce on the living conditions of both parents and their children is ongoing. Simultaneously, care policy for divorcees and their children is developed gradually. In order to be effective, implementation of policy requires quantitative data on the number and status of targeted children.

According to register data (1/1/2004), more than one fifth of all native children experienced a divorce/separation of their parents, with proportions increasing from 10% among 0- to 2-year olds up to 24% at an age of 12 to 17. These observations are compared with the five aforementioned migrant groups.

Being confronted with divorce/separation at a certain time does not imply that a child will spend its further childhood in a one-parent family from then on. The younger native children are at the time of the divorce/separation, the greater chances are that they will become part of a reconstituted family. Native children staying with their father following divorce/separation are more likely to be living with a stepparent in the future than those remaining in the care of their mother. To explore recent post-divorce living arrangements according to migrant origin, household types (one-parent family, reconstituted family, other) in 2004 are examined for children whose parents divorced in 1999.